

What is claimed is:

1. In a radio communication system having a mobile node operable at least to communicate packet data pursuant to a packet communication session by way of a selected network portion of a network part of the radio communication system, the network part having a plurality of network portions, an improvement of apparatus for
5 facilitating selection of which of the plurality of network portions forms the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is communicated pursuant to the communication session, said apparatus comprising:

a storage element embodied at the mobile node, said storage element
10 selectably containing a listing of a preferred set of network portions associated with the mobile node together with network-portion capabilities of individual ones of the network portions, if any, forming the preferred set;

a selector coupled to said storage element, said selector for selecting the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is communicated, selection
15 made by said selector of one of the network portions, if any, identified in the listing contained at said storage element that exhibits network-portion capabilities of packet data connectivity, and if none of the network portions, if any, identified in the listing exhibit packet data connectivity, selection made by said selector selectably is made of another network portion to form the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is
20 communicated.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the plurality of network portions comprises a home network associated with the mobile node, the home network maintaining a preferred roaming list identifying preferred network portions by way of
25 which the mobile node is to communicate when roaming beyond the home network, and wherein the listing of the preferred set contained at said storage element comprises the preferred roaming list.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein each network portion of the plurality of
30 network portions is identified by a network identifier and wherein the listing contained at

said storage element identifies each network portion of the preferred set by the network identifier associated therewith.

4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the network identifier identifying each
5 of the network portions of the preferred set stored at said storage element comprises a country code and a network code, the country code identifying a country in which the network portion identified therefrom is located and the network code uniquely associated with the network portion identified therefrom.

10 5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network part of the radio communication system is coupled to the mobile node by way of a radio are interfaced and wherein the listing contained at said storage element is formed of information downloaded thereto by way of the radio air interface.

15 6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the listing contained at said storage element is dynamically maintained.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the network-portion capabilities of the individual ones of the network portions comprise identification of whether the individual
20 ones of the network portions are within communication range of the mobile node to be available thereto by way of which to communicate, availability of the network portions dynamically maintained.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network-portion capabilities of the
25 individual ones of the network portions comprise identification of whether the individual ones of the network portions provide voice data connectivity and of whether the individual ones of the network portions provide the packet data connectivity.

9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network portions of the plurality of
30 network portions each broadcast signals containing identification information and

wherein said apparatus further comprises a detector for detecting the signals containing the identification information.

10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein selection made by said selector
5 selectably of the another network portion is of a network portion of which the signals containing the identification information is detected by said detector.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said detector detects signals containing
the identification information broadcast by a first of the network portions and signals
10 containing the identification information by at least a second of the network portions and wherein selection made by said selector selectably of the another network portion is one of the first and at least second network portions, respectively.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising a packet-connection
15 attemptor adapted to receive indications of selection made by said selector, said packet-connection attemptor for attempting to form a packet-connection with the selected network portion.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the packet data communicated pursuant
20 to the packet communication session is communicated to effectuate a packet data communication service with an entity identified by an access point name, and wherein said packet-connection attemptor attempts to form the packet connection with the entity identified by the access point name.

25 14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the listing contained at said storage element further indexes the access point name together with the network portion through which the packet data is communicated of said packet-connection attemptor successfully forms the packet connection with the entity.

15. In a method of communicating in a radio communication system having a mobile node operable at least to communicate packet data pursuant to a packet communication session by way of a selected network portion of a network part of the radio communication system, the network part having a plurality of network portions, an improvement of a method for facilitating selection of which of the plurality of network portions forms the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is communicated pursuant to the communication session, said method comprising:

forming a listing at the mobile node of a preferred set of network portions associated with the mobile node together with network-portion capabilities of individual ones of the network portions, if any, forming the preferred set, and selecting the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is communicated, selection of one of the network portions, if any, identified in the listing, formed during said operation of listing, formed during said operation of listing, that exhibits network-portion capabilities of packet data connectivity; and, if none of the network portions, if any, identified in the listing exhibit packet data connectivity, then selectably selecting another network portion to form the selected network portion by way of which the packet data is communicated.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the plurality of network portions comprises a home network associated with the mobile node, the home network maintaining a roaming list identifying preferred network portions by way of which the mobile node is to communicate when roaming beyond the home network, and wherein the listing formed during said operation of forming, of the preferred set comprises the preferred roaming list.

17. The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation of dynamically maintaining the listing formed during said operation of forming.

18. The method of claim 15 further comprising the operations of broadcasting signals from at least selected ones of the network portions and detecting, at the mobile node, the signals broadcast during said operation of broadcasting.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein selection made during said operation of selectably selecting of the another network portion is of a network portion of which the signals broadcast during said operation of broadcasting and detected during said operation of detecting.

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20. The method of claim 19 further comprising the operation of attempting to form a packet connection with the selected network portion.